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(54) **ELECTRICAL CONTACT DEVICE OF THE CONTACT FINGER TYPE WITH A STRONG NOMINAL CURRENT**

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(58) **Field of Classification Search**

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USPC 200/245, 294, 50.1, 260, 281; 337/196, 337/212

See application file for complete search history.

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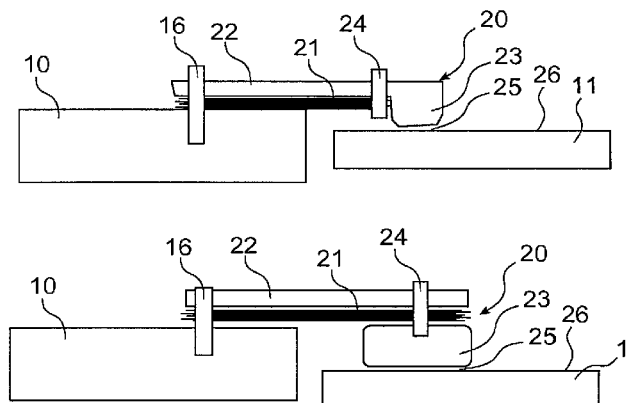
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(57) **ABSTRACT**

An electrical contact device of the contact finger type for high nominal current between a first part that is conductive and a conductive surface of a second part comprising a flexible rod connected to a first connection element for mechanical and electrical connection to the first part, a contact portion applied on the conductive surface of the second part, and at least one metal contact blade placed at a first end between a first end of the flexible rod and the first part. The flexible rod is conductive, and the at least one metal blade is connected at its second end to the second end of the flexible rod by a second mechanical and electrical connection element.

6 Claims, 2 Drawing Sheets



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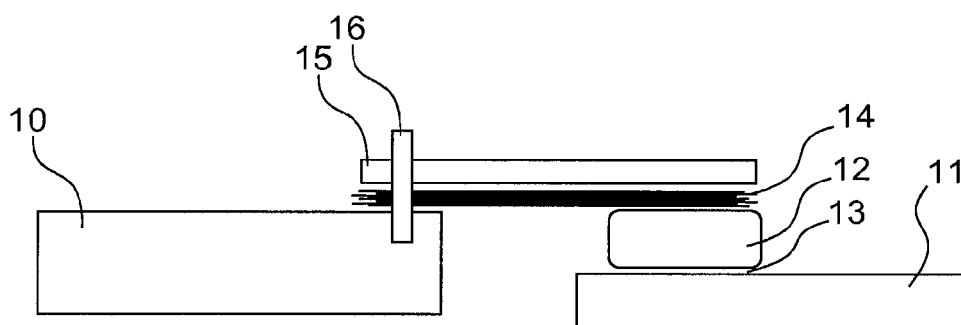


FIG. 1
(PRIOR ART)

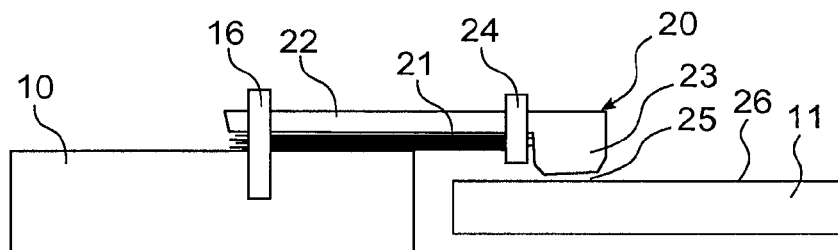


FIG. 2

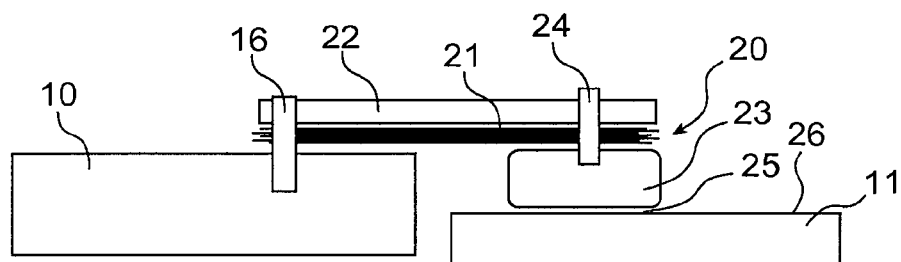


FIG. 3

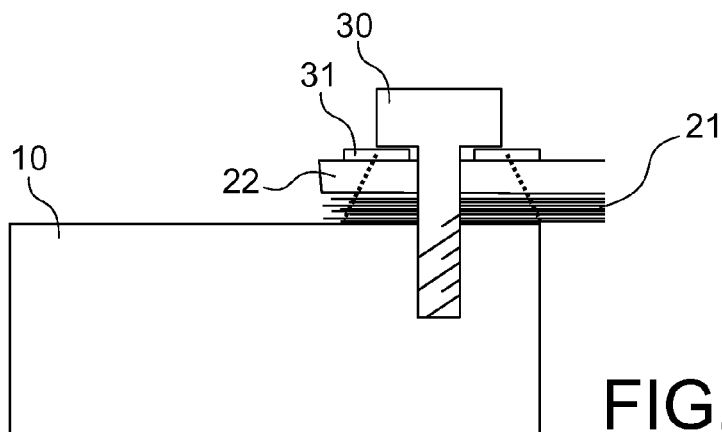


FIG. 4

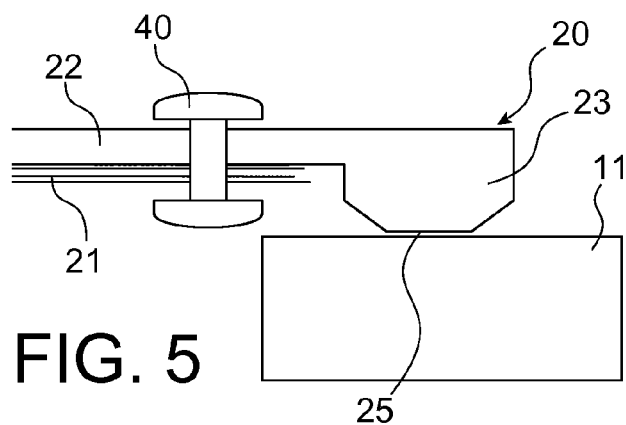


FIG. 5

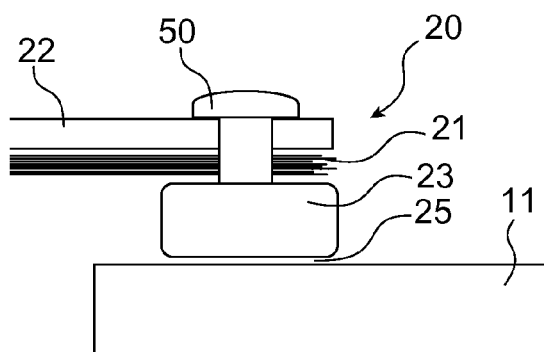


FIG. 6

1

ELECTRICAL CONTACT DEVICE OF THE CONTACT FINGER TYPE WITH A STRONG NOMINAL CURRENT

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED PATENT APPLICATIONS

The present application is a National Stage Application of International Application No. PCT/EP2013/070318 entitled "ELECTRICAL CONTACT DEVICE OF THE CONTACT FINGER TYPE WITH A STRONG NOMINAL CURRENT" filed Sep. 30, 2013, which claims priority of French Patent Application No. 1259334, filed Oct. 2, 2012, the contents of each incorporated herein by reference in their entirety.

TECHNICAL FIELD

The invention relates to an electrical contact device of the contact finger type for high nominal current.

PRIOR ART

A first known example of an embodiment of electrical contact of the contact finger type between a first part **10** and a second part **11** is shown in FIG. 1. The electrical contact is made up of a contact pad **12** applied on a conductive surface of the second part **11** along a contact zone **13**, metal blades **14**, and a flexible rod **15**. Said blades, which are connected to a connection element **16** for mechanical and electrical connection to the first part **10**, enable electric current to pass between the contact pad **12** and said element **16**. The flexible rod **15** performs a spring function and makes it possible to provide contact force without passing electric current.

A second known example of an embodiment of electrical contact of the contact finger type consists in a one-piece contact, in which the three above-described functions of providing electrical contact, of passing electricity, and of acting as a spring are combined in a single element that is obtained for example, by machining or by die-stamping.

This second example constitutes an economical embodiment. However, a difficulty remains due to the current-passing function and the spring function being dimensioned together. The current-passing function would require a choice of materials having conductive properties suitable for limiting temperature rises: typically copper, aluminum, or alloys thereof. However, the use of such materials for providing the spring function leads to considerable limits concerning contact dimensions, notably because of the stresses and of the resulting force, in particular because of a maximum stress that must not be exceeded for the material. As a result, for a given size, said second example presents a limit value for acceptable nominal current.

The invention aims to modify such a one-piece contact, or a contact that is close in design to such a one-piece contact, in order to increase the nominal current in a given size.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The invention provides an electrical contact device of the contact finger type for high nominal current between a first part that is conductive and a conductive surface of a second part, said device comprising a flexible rod connected to a first connection element for mechanical and electrical connection to the first part, a contact portion applied on the conductive surface of the second part, and at least one metal

2

contact blade placed at a first end between a first end of the flexible rod and the first part, the device being characterized in that the flexible rod is conductive and in that the at least one metal blade is connected at its second end to the second end of the flexible rod by means of a second mechanical and electrical connection element. The first connection element may comprise a screw or a rivet. The second connection element may comprise a rivet. The second connection element may be made by crimping and deforming a prominent portion of a contact pad. The first connection element may be connected to the first part by screw-fastening. In a first embodiment the flexible rod and the contact portion form a single piece. Advantageously, the flexible rod and the contact portion are made of copper, aluminum, or alloys thereof.

The device of the invention makes it possible to increase the nominal current for a given size.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. 1 shows an example of a contact device of the prior art.

The FIGS. 2 and 3 show two embodiments of the device of the invention.

FIGS. 4 to 6 show characteristics of the device of the invention such as those shown in FIGS. 2 and 3.

DETAILED SUMMARY OF PARTICULAR EMBODIMENTS

In the device of the invention, as shown in FIGS. 2 and 3, a conductive flexible elongate contact element **20**, which is the main conductor of electricity, performs a spring function and a contact pad function. It may be made as a single piece, as shown in FIG. 2, or as two pieces, as shown in FIG. 3. At least one metal blade **21** provides additional section for passing electricity in such a manner as to obtain a finger of simple structure in a given size maximizing the nominal current it can pass.

The contact element **20** comprises a first portion **22** in the form of a rod and a second portion **23** in the form of a contact pad that may form parts of a single piece or that may form two separate pieces. A first end of the at least one blade **21** is disposed between the first part **10** and the first end of the first portion of the conductive part **20**, that is itself connected to said first part **10** via the connection element **16**. A second end of the at least one blade **21** is connected to the second end of the first portion **22** of the contact element **20** by a mechanical and electrical connection element **24**.

The at least one contact blade makes it possible to increase the nominal current without increasing the contact force.

The reference **25** designates the contact zone between the second portion **23** of the contact element **20** and the conductive surface **26** of the second part **11**.

FIGS. 4 to 6 show embodiment examples of the first and second connection elements **16** and **24**.

1. First Connection Element **16**, Shown in FIG. 4:

This first connection element **16** may be made with the help of a screw or rivet **30** connecting the contact element **20** and the contact blade(s) **21** to the first part **10**. A single link thus enables the three elements to be joined together: first part **10**, metal blades **21**, and contact element **20**.

When the clamping force is considerable, in order to limit the compression stress in the conductive materials and/or in order to provide a satisfactory current-passing surface, a force-distribution washer **31** may be used that is placed under the screw or rivet head.

3

2. Second Connection Element **24**, Shown in FIGS. **5** and **6**:

The second connection point between the blade or blades **21** and the contact element **20** may be made either by a rivet **40**, as shown in FIG. **5**, or by crimping and deforming a prominent portion of a contact pad **50** inserted in the blade(s) **21** and the contact element **20**, as shown in FIG. **6**. Another effective solution uses screw-fastening for the two variants considered above. In any event, the same rules as those of the second point relating to the first connection element with the first part apply.

In an advantageous example embodiment, the contact element **20** may have a length lying in the range 3 centimeters (cm) to 15 cm, a thickness in its first portion **22** lying in the range 3 millimeters (mm) to 20 mm. Each metal blade may have a thickness lying in the range 0.1 mm to 1 mm. The contact element **20** and the blades may be made of copper, aluminum, or alloys thereof.

The invention claimed is:

1. An electrical contact device for high nominal current between a first part that is conductive and a conductive surface of a second part, said device comprising:

- a. a flexible rod connected to a first connection element for mechanical and electrical connection to the first part,

4

- b. a contact portion applied on the conductive surface of the second part, and at least one metal contact blade placed at a first end between a first end of the flexible rod and the first part, wherein the flexible rod is conductive, wherein the at least one metal blade is connected at its second end to the second end of the flexible rod by means of a second mechanical and electrical connection element, so that to form an additional section for passing a high nominal current, and wherein the flexible rod and the contact portion form a single piece.

2. A device according to claim **1**, in which the first connection element comprises a screw or a rivet.

3. A device according to claim **1**, in which the second connection element comprises a rivet.

4. A device according to claim **1**, in which the second connection element is made by crimping and deforming a prominent portion of a contact pad.

5. A device according to claim **3**, in which the first connection element is connected to the first part by screw-fastening.

6. A device according to claim **1**, in which the flexible rod and the contact portion are made of copper, aluminum, or alloys thereof.

* * * * *